

## THE WINDOW

### THE NORTH AMERICAN PRESS

By ALFRED LUECKENHAUS

*In news cables from overseas, excerpts from more or less prominent newspapers are frequently quoted. Readers in East Asia have sometimes asked about the background of this or that paper. We are therefore publishing a study, a kind of "Who's Who" of the press of the United States, written by a journalist who was for four years the chief correspondent of the German DNB news agency in New York.—K.M.*

**I**N the last peace year, in 1941, there were in the USA roughly 2,000 daily newspapers, of which 120 to 150 might be called publications of the first rank. Their total circulation at that time numbered well over 35 million, but it may be assumed that the war with its stimulating effect on newspaper readers has caused a further increase.

North American press opinion essentially reflects the opinions of the ruling class. It is centrally directed by a majority of the leading organs, which are either controlled, maintained, or owned by those in power. From 65 to 75 per cent of all American dailies are either affiliated with or stand close to the Republican Party, while most of the remainder may be considered as organs or mouthpieces of the Democratic Party. There is no labor press worth talking about. In questions of domestic policy, the Republican press was very critical of the Roosevelt Administration until the fall of 1937, when Roosevelt embarked on his policy of intervention abroad ("quarantine" speech in Chicago, October 4, 1937). Almost from that day on, the Republican press, with certain but noteworthy exceptions such as the *Chicago Tribune*, concentrated on foreign issues in support of the new course chosen by the Government.

All the important news as well as all the essential views emanate from two main centers of distribution: Washington, D.C., the national capital, and New York, the financial capital of the USA. Since the war started, this tendency must have become even more accentuated than before.

#### NEWSPAPER CHAINS

A remarkable development of the American press is that of the newspaper groups

or concerns. There are now approximately fifty such groups, the combined circulation of which makes up nearly 40 per cent of the total of all American dailies; but while most of these groups are sectional, only the following two may be said to have attained national scope: the Hearst newspapers, owned by William Randolph Hearst and composed of 25 dailies in 17 cities, and the Scripps-Howard chain, controlled by Roy Wilson Howard and composed of 24 papers in 23 cities. Both these groups call themselves politically independent, there being, as far as is known, no political affiliations and no financial control from outside, unless the control exercised by the advertisers is included.

Before the war, the Hearst newspapers, in their editorials if not in their news columns, were strongly isolationist, and almost every day they condemned the foreign policy of the Administration in leading articles supposed to have been written by the publisher himself. William Randolph Hearst, despite the huge aggregation of newspaper and magazine properties he controls, is not primarily a newspaper publisher. His main financial interest is in the form of large share holdings in some mining companies. Subsidiary financial interests exist in the form of real estate, hotels, etc. The Scripps-Howard group, on the other hand, which is run purely as a business enterprise, was noncommittal in its editorial attitude but later followed the trend of developments. Of the other newspaper concerns, only the Frank E. Gannett group and the Jewish Paul Block group need be mentioned.

#### NEWS AGENCIES

In the USA there are three big news agencies: the Associated Press of America (AP), the United Press of America (UP), and

the International News Service (INS). The Associated Press is a co-operative society of about 1,600 newspaper publishers, founded for the purpose of saving expenses. It supplies all the news it collects free of charge, and its expenses are covered by annual payments on the part of the members of the association, who also act as correspondents of the head office of the AP in their respective districts. The AP is not supposed to make any profits. In view of the fact that it has to supply newspapers of all political shades, the AP had to observe strict impartiality in presenting the news—particularly domestic news. Until the present war broke out, it succeeded in doing so, to a certain degree, even in the foreign field. Until December 8, 1941, the AP had exchange arrangements with Reuter's, Havas, DNB, and Domei, but the latter two dropped out with the beginning of the Greater East Asia War. These arrangements provided for the exchange of the respective national news services free of charge. The AP correspondent in Berlin, for instance, had all the rights of a regular subscriber to the DNB News Service, and vice versa the DNB correspondent in New York to the AP News Service. Last year the General Manager of the AP, Kent Cooper, was appointed chief of the American War Censorship Bureau.

In contrast to the AP, the United Press—serving more than 1,000 newspapers in the USA and foreign countries—and the less important International News Service are run on a strictly profit-making basis. For this very reason, their presentation of news has always been of a more sensational character. In view of the strong competition offered by the highly efficient organization of the AP, both the UP and the INS resorted to a policy of making "scoops" at any price. Accuracy and reliability of the news as presented by them thereby suffered. The International News Service is a Hearst subsidiary and supplies Hearst papers as well as an unknown number of other newspapers.

#### FEATURES AND COLUMNISTS

New York, where the afore-mentioned news agencies have their head offices, also harbors most of the "feature syndicates," which either specialize in certain subjects or supply principally foreign material to medium-sized newspapers which cannot afford their own correspondents abroad. In addition, a number of important papers maintaining large staffs of foreign correspondents

operate syndicated news services which are used extensively by other papers. The largest services of this kind include those of *The New York Times*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Daily News*, and the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*.

New York is also the seat and spiritual center of most of America's well-known columnists. While it is correct to assert that with the spreading of straight news you can misdirect public opinion in any given direction either by omitting important facts or by distorting the truth, it is even more correct to say that political story writers, if they happen to be unscrupulous, may exert a disastrous influence on the life of a community. There is no other country where the press is organized in such a way as to allow a handful of columnists a vital share in forming an entire people's political outlook and mentality. People like Dorothy Thompson, Mrs. Roosevelt, and Westbrook Pegler, as well as Walter Lippman and Walter Winchell (both Jewish), greatly assisted the Roosevelt Administration in bringing about intervention abroad. On an average, each one of approximately fifteen or twenty columnists with nationwide publicity supplies either daily or three times a week between 100 and 600 newspapers with comments on various subjects, mostly on foreign affairs. Dorothy Thompson's column, called "On the Record," is regularly read three times a week by about 8 million readers of 200 newspapers (the figure fluctuates). In her writings, Dorothy Thompson is highly emotional. She has been called the Madame Tabouis of the United States. With her French colleague, she shares her hatred of National-Socialism, her sympathy for Jews and Jewish ideas, and a certain share of responsibility for the present war. Her influence on American women—who, after all, spend more than 70 per cent of the nation's income—should not be underrated. According to *Time*, Dorothy Thompson is infallible to America's womanhood, particularly in small towns and in the country, not so much because of her writings but because of what she is. For them, she is the typical modern American woman as they would like to see her: emancipated, successful, an outstanding figure living in one of the most exciting periods of history and interpreting to millions of people the world's events.

Walter Lippman is another star in the firmament of American columnists. Having

once been Assistant War Secretary, he claims to be an expert on questions of war and strategy. Under the cloak of his expert knowledge, he advocated—prior to America's entry into the war—that the American zone of safety be extended further and further east until it finally reached right into the declared zone of operations of the German Navy. He advocated this, he said, because he wanted to "protect America's neutrality."

The political and financial affiliations of the more important of America's newspapers are as follows:

*The New York Times*: circulation 475,000; publisher A. H. Sulzberger; general manager Colonel Adler (both Jewish); independent Democratic. Staunch supporter of Roosevelt's foreign policy. The Jewish Lehman family (ex-governor of New York State Herbert Lehman is one of the principals of the banking firm of Lehman Brothers) is closely connected with this paper by one of its subsidiary companies supplying newsprint. *The New York Times* caters for America's intelligentsia. It is read by financiers, businessmen, and the upper middle class all along the Atlantic shore of the USA and further west. It maintains one of the largest foreign news services of any newspaper in the world. A number of members of the editorial staff as well as some of the more important foreign correspondents are British subjects. Prior to the outbreak of the European war, for instance, Duranty, Birchall and Gedye, all three Englishmen, were correspondents of *The New York Times* in European capitals. "All the news that is fit to print" is its slogan. Its editorial as well as its news policy are strictly biased in all questions of foreign policy despite the fact that it used to publish the war communiqués of the Axis and other pronouncements of Germany and Japan in full. *The New York Times* is undoubtedly the most important of all American newspapers, although not quite as important as the London *Times* whose namesake it is.

New York *Herald-Tribune*: circulation roughly 360,000; publisher Mrs. Ogden Reid; Republican. The Reids have close family connections in England, and in their political outlook they are more English than the English. The Chase National Bank group of New York, in which the Rockefellers have an interest, is known to have money invested in this paper. According to Ferdinand Lundberg's *America's 60 Families*, the *Herald-Tribune* must be regarded as a newspaper under strong Morgan influence. It is due to the hospitality which Mrs. Ogden Reid has given her in the *Herald-Tribune* that Dorothy Thompson attained a nation-wide reputation as a columnist. The *Herald-Tribune* was the first American newspaper to demand war on Germany. It is read by the upper strata of society, by well-to-do Americans of English ancestry, by manufacturers and industrialists, and by the leading members of the Republican Party.

*The New York Sun*: circulation 310,000; Republican; publisher W. T. Dewart; editor F. M. O'Brien. The executives are understood to have obtained the money to buy the paper in

the form of a loan, a large part of which is still said to be outstanding, from the Guaranty Trust Company. Of all the New York evening papers, the *Sun* is the most serious-minded. It does not practice "yellow journalism," that is, it does not reflect on the character of prominent people for the sake of sensationalism. Those who influence the policy of this paper are said to have connections with the Catholic Church, although it is not a religious newspaper. Bought on the streets, it is read on the way home by about the same class of people as those who subscribe to *The New York Times* or the *Herald-Tribune*.

*The New York Post*: circulation 225,000; the oldest daily in New York, Democratic, exclusively under Jewish influence. Formerly owned by David Stern, it is now in the hands of the President of the American Zionists. It indulges in wild, irresponsible sensationalism and does not hesitate to invent the most gruesome atrocities which are supposed to have happened abroad, particularly in Germany. In presenting domestic news it is vulgar and obscene. This may suffice to characterize the class of readers for which this paper caters.

*The New York World-Telegram*: circulation 430,000; a Scripps-Howard newspaper; chief columnist Westbrook Pegler.

*The New York Daily News*: the largest American newspaper, with a circulation of almost 2,000,000; tabloid; politically nondescript; publisher Joseph Medill Patterson of a famous newspaper family to which also belongs Robert R. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1936, Patterson was a New Deal supporter. Prior to the war, it advocated a sober course in foreign affairs, but it would be going too far to call the paper isolationist. Society gossip and so-called "human interest stories" (love affairs, gruesome crimes, trials of famous people, sporting events, etc.) account for the huge circulation figures, which on Sundays even pass the 3-million mark. Publisher Patterson coined the following self-explanatory sentence: "The *Daily News* was made 'with naked legs,' but after having reached a sufficiently high circulation we covered them up."

*P.M.*: Editor Ralph Ingersoll; a New York tabloid appearing, as is indicated by its name, in the afternoon. The fact that it contains an unusually large number of photographs has led to the popular misconception that the letters of its name stand for "Picture Magazine." Founded in 1940 in support of Roosevelt's foreign policy, it has since changed hands several times. Wildly aggressive and abusive, with no particular regard for the truth, it appeals to the worst instincts in people of low educational standard and hence enjoys a considerable circulation.

*Journal of Commerce*: circulation 17,000; publisher Alexander R. Sharton; a commercial paper originally founded as a semireligious newspaper in 1827 by Arthur Tappan.

*Wall Street Journal*: circulation 25,000; a financial paper; editor W. H. Grimes.

*The Washington Post*: circulation 130,000; independent, but with strong leanings toward Roosevelt's foreign policy; publisher Eugene Meyer, a Jewish banker and industrialist. The

*Post* is almost the only important paper of the American capital. The early editions of *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald-Tribune* are supplied to Washington readers well in time for breakfast.

The *Chicago Tribune*: with its circulation of 1,000,000 the second largest American newspaper; publisher Robert R. McCormick, an outstanding figure in the American newspaper world because of his independence. During the election campaign in 1936, the *Chicago Tribune* was violently anti-New Deal, and four years later just as violently opposed to Roosevelt's re-election for a third term. In the critical period preceding this war this paper, which circulates all over the Middle West, fought an almost solitary battle against America's involvement in a war overseas. Lately, Robert McCormick has been demanding the incorporation of the British Empire in the United States. There are two principal reasons why McCormick has been able to swim against the stream: the disinclination of large parts of the people in the Middle West to fight against Germany, and the financial and consequently the spiritual integrity of the *Tribune* organization. As a result of his "America first" policy, McCormick has even increased his circulation. Politically the paper may be called independent Republican.

*Chicago Daily News*: circulation 450,000; independent but very pro-Roosevelt; publisher Colonel Frank Knox, now Secretary of the Navy. Morgan, via the Steel Corporation, exercises an influence on the *Chicago Daily News*. The paper's general attitude is characterized by the fact that its publisher Knox, a member of the Republican Party whom Roosevelt took into his Cabinet to give it the appearance of a coalition government, is personally responsible for the many German-American incidents which he provoked in order to bring about an armed conflict.

*Christian Science Monitor*: place of issue Boston; circulation 120,000; distributed not only in the USA but in many foreign countries as well. Published by the Christian Science Publishing Society; prefers, however, not to be called a religious newspaper. During the events leading up to the present international crisis, this paper published carefully worded leaders and leaderettes, intermingled with quotations from the Bible, condemning "aggression" and "international brigandage," but without ever being specific. Regular readers of *Monitor* never had any doubt, however, that these camouflaged attacks were meant to hit the Axis powers. Editors: J. Roscoe Drummond, Roland R. Harrison, Albert F. Gilmore, and Frank L. Perrin.

The *Los Angeles Times*: circulation 200,000; independent Republican; editor R. W. Trueblood. Like all papers on the Pacific coast, the *Los Angeles Times* has always taken a bigger interest in East Asiatic than in European affairs. No details are available as to the financial control of the paper.

The *San Francisco Examiner*: circulation 160,000, one of the first Hearst papers.

The *St. Louis Post Dispatch*: circulation 240,000, independent. Its late publisher Joseph Pulitzer Sr. (Jewish) can claim the right to be the inventor of "yellow journalism," with which he acquired

a large fortune. He donated part of this money to a fund out of which annual rewards are paid to the best journalistic achievement of the year.

#### PERIODICALS

What has been said of the financial and political affiliations of North America's daily press also applies to the great variety of American magazines and periodicals. The number of quarterlies, monthlies, and weeklies appearing in the USA, with or without illustrations, is larger than that of any other country, and the circulation of some of the periodicals is well above the million mark. The *Reader's Digest*, with its more than 4 million copies, has the largest circulation of any magazine in the world.

There are scores of cheap picture magazines, cheap in price and cheap in contents. An example of this group is *Liberty* (circulation 2,300,000) which, besides short stories and light articles, has in each issue one or more political "features" of a vulgar nature. There are, however, also a lesser number of high-class magazines and periodicals catering to people with a mind of their own. Although these magazines are, as a rule, also cheap in price, they are more cunning or more intelligent—as the case may be—in the field of political propaganda.

The main principle on which the picture magazines base their policy and to which they owe their popularity is the outworn belief that the camera cannot lie. But photographs can lie just as much as written or spoken words, even if they are genuine snapshots. The selection of pictures, for instance, always gives the editor an opportunity to express his bias; and good and bad photos can be taken of men as well as of events, just as the cameraman sees fit. Moreover, pictures can also be faked.

Besides the picture magazines, there are many periodicals containing articles and short stories only. A majority of the more important ones deal prominently with international affairs.

In contrast to the daily press, most of North America's magazines and periodicals have, for the better part of the last five years, been engaged in helping the Roosevelt Administration on its road to war.

Here are some of the more important publications:

*Fortune*: circulation 150,000; publisher Time Inc.; editor Henry R. Luce. A very high-class monthly published in New York and dealing with political, economic, and social matters.

Industrialists, big-business men, financiers, social reformers both amateur and professional, etc., are its principal readers. Scientific in presenting its views but not without occasional gibes at totalitarianism. Strong leanings toward America's plutocracy. Also conducts polls along the lines of the Gallup polls.

*Time*: circulation 750,000; publisher Time Inc.; editor Henry R. Luce. The oldest publication of the Luce concern. Luce is a college friend of one of the Morgan partners, and his magazines are financed largely by the Morgan circle. Luce's wife, the authoress Clare Booth, entered Congress some time ago. *Time* is a news weekly whose chief characteristic is an intelligent though rather flippant presentation of the world's news in condensed form. Its political leanings are Republican (Wendell Willkie was "discovered" by Luce and some of his friends), though it has always faithfully supported Roosevelt's foreign policy.

*News-Week*: circulation 400,000; publisher Malcolm Muir, New York. A competitor to *Time*, also financed by Wall Street interests.

*Life*: circulation 2,800,000; publisher Time Inc.; editor Henry R. Luce. A weekly picture magazine, it is the most successful of the Luce publications. Popular in its make-up and priced at ten cents, it presents the latest events in excellent photos printed on first-class paper. Similar in policy to *Time*, it staunchly propagates the American people's mission to impose upon the rest of the world what they call the American way of life.

*Look*: circulation 1,800,000; editor Vernon Pope. A fortnightly picture magazine popular among lower-class people. An outspoken opponent of the "have-not" nations. One of its regular contributors is Dorothy Thompson.

*The Saturday Evening Post*: circulation 3,200,000; published in Philadelphia. Read by the middle classes and farm population throughout the country, it contains chiefly fiction and a few articles of popular interest, as well as one short political leader. Republican and isolationist in its editorial policy, it never failed prior to the war to castigate Roosevelt's foreign policy. When war finally broke out, it announced to its readers that its views remained the same but that it would do nothing to hinder America's war effort.

*Collier's Weekly*: circulation 2,890,000; editor William L. Chenery, a typical American interventionist. A competitor to *The Saturday*

*Evening Post* and similarly priced at 5 cents. Political editor Walter Davenport, a man with close relations to Wendell Willkie.

*Reader's Digest*: circulation over 4,000,000; editors DeWitt Wallace and Lila Acheson Wallace; published by the Reader's Digest Association Inc., at Pleasantville, N.Y. Having made a huge success of reprinting condensed articles of "lasting interest" from other magazines, the *Reader's Digest* has in recent years begun to publish original articles devoted mostly to crusades of political and other nature.

*Atlantic Monthly*: circulation 100,000; editor E. A. Weeks, Jr.; published in Boston. A literary, political, and economic magazine of high standard. "You Can't Do Business With Hitler" and similar articles characterize the attitude of this periodical before the outbreak of war.

*Harper's Magazine*: circulation 100,000; editor Lee F. Hartman; published in New York. Very similar in type and standard to the *Atlantic Monthly*, though perhaps slightly more conservative.

*United States News*: circulation 110,000; editor David Lawrence; published in Washington. A weekly record of government and state activities.

*Current History and Forum*: circulation 75,000; published in New York. A very pro-English semimonthly whose motto, seven months prior to Pearl Harbor, was "America will win this war." Hendrik van Loon is one of the chief contributors. The lionizing of British politicians has always been one of its main preoccupations.

*Foreign Affairs*: circulation 15,000; editor Hamilton Fish Armstrong; published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. (New York). A quarterly review which before the war contained contributions from many nations, although those presenting the viewpoint of the "have-nots" were very few. The broad hospitality boasted of by the editor in introducing contributors has for the last five years been nothing but a myth.

*The Nation*: circulation 37,000; editor Freda Kirchwey. A liberal weekly with socialist leanings, devoted to current affairs.

*New Republic*: circulation: 30,000; editor Bruce Bliven. A pro-Soviet weekly dealing with political and social questions. Like *The Nation*, it often contained articles by prominent American foreign correspondents who wished to reveal interesting facts that did not suit the policy of the journals employing them.